



Office of Asian & Pacific Islander Affairs

Sanjita Pradhan, Executive Officer

Lucas State Office Building
321 E. 12th Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Phone: 515-218-4219
humanrights.iowa.gov/cas/capi

Iowa Department of Human Rights

**The Iowa Department of
Human Rights brings
strength to our rich Iowa
heritage.**

**We eliminate cultural and
economic barriers, and
work to empower Iowans.**

We are the voice for many.



We Grow Opportunity

Office of Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs

The **Office of Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs** in the Iowa Department of Human Rights is the permanent agency to advocate for Iowans of Asian and Pacific Islander heritage.

The mission of the Office is to ensure Iowa's Asians and Pacific Islanders have opportunities equal to other Iowans in education, employment, health care, housing and safety, and to publicize the accomplishments and contributions of the Asian and Pacific Islanders (APIs) to the state.

The Office's services include:

- Advocating for culturally and linguistically appropriate services in government agencies and other assistance providers
- Serving as liaison between the Office and the public
- Ensuring constituents are treated fairly and have equal rights and access
- Recommending action to elected officials





2016-2017 Priorities

Civic Engagement

The AAPI electorate is growing rapidly both nationally and in Iowa. Iowa's Asian population experienced a 49.6% increase from 2000 to 2010 and more recently from 2000 to 2013 Iowa's Asian population saw a 72.8% increase. Despite growing numbers of the Asian American electorate, significant gaps in citizenship and voter registration for Asian Americans continue to exist. AAPI's have also been historically underrepresented in elected office and other government positions. To improve civic participation from Asian and Pacific Islander communities the office has the following goals:

- **Voter Education**—Ensuring all AAPI's including newly naturalized people to learn about their new rights as a voter.
- **Voter registration**—Help more API's to be registered to vote.
- **Develop Civic Leaders**— through leadership training opportunities and other tactics and encourage more AAPI's to be on different boards, commissions and elected office.

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Youth Engagement

Engagement with API youths is key to ensure that they get a good start, exposure, learning and leadership opportunities, so they can become better students, community members and future leaders. API youths particularly those who are new immigrants and refugees would benefit highly from targeted outreach and leadership programs.

The office of Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs will focus on the following youth engagement programs.

- API Youth leadership summit for high school and university level youths.
- API youth mentorship for young professionals
- More engagement of API youths in the Civic Engagement initiative.

Language Access

Language is one of the top barriers for APIs in being able to access government programs navigate the new system in which they live, and fully contribute to the economic and civic development of their new home.

The ability to understand and communicate in English has a significant impact on a new American's ability to find a job, advance in a career and become civically active in his or her community.

To enhance language access, the Office is:

Engaging relevant organizations and communities in discussions about language access issues to provide education and spur action.

Sharing best practices.

Improving interpreter resources and the quality of interpreters in the State of Iowa.